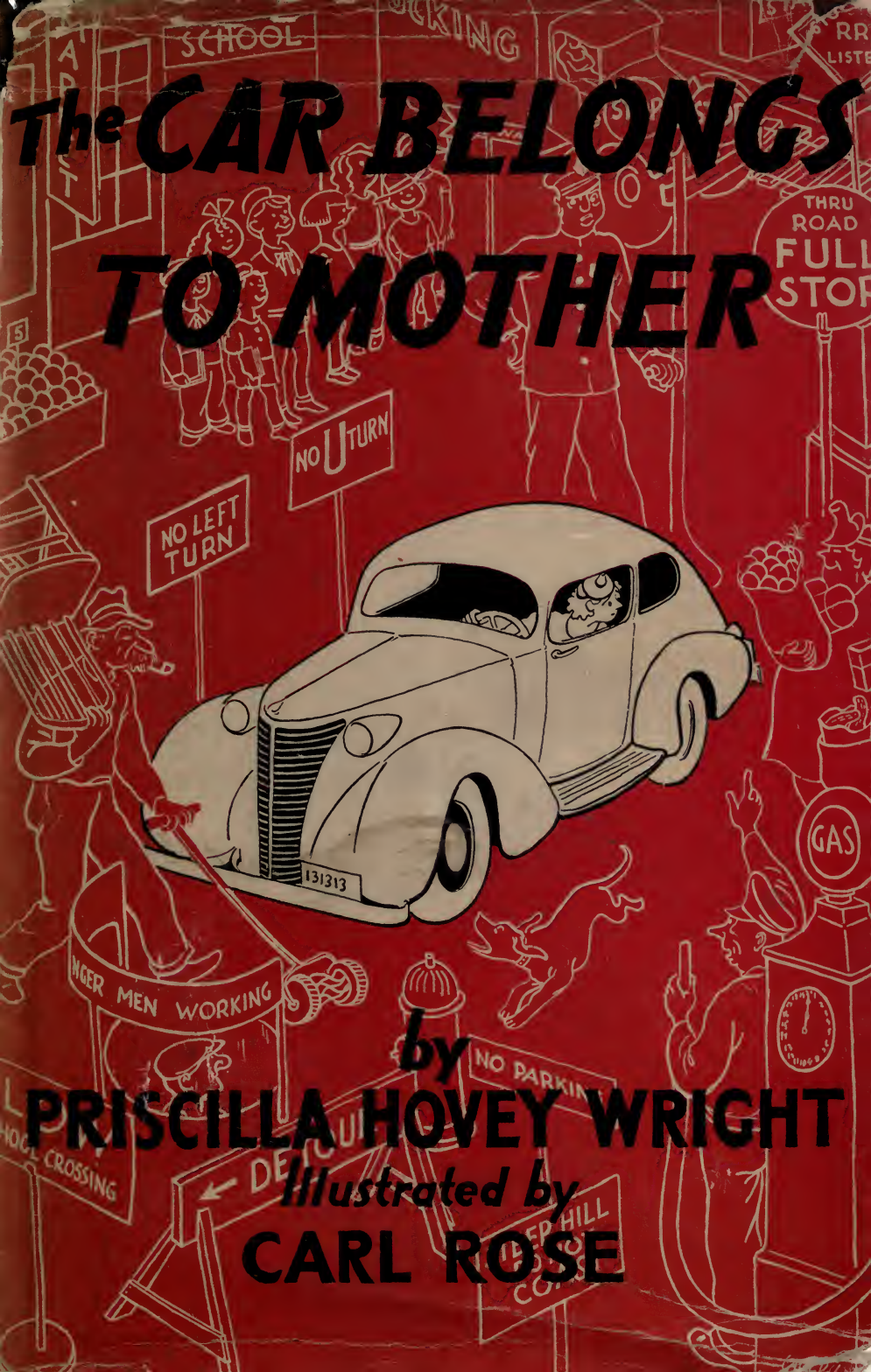




The **CAR BELONGS TO MOTHER**

by

PRISCILLA HOVEY WRIGHT

Illustrated by

CARL ROSE

THE CAR BELONGS TO MOTHER

By

PRISCILLA HOVEY WRIGHT

THE world has waited vainly for an articulate presentation of the inner life of that often-mentioned, but never understood person, the woman driver of the automobile. We refer particularly to the matron who transports her husband to and from trains, her children to school, herself to market, club members to their homes on unaccepted streets, and relatives on their various whims and vagaries.

Mrs. Wright, long saddened by the masculine attitude toward the feminine hand at the wheel, has finally discovered the obscure reason for it. It proves to be an especially bitter and baffling brand of frustration. With the help of Carl Rose's pictures she has explained this attitude and has set forth the problems. All wives will draw aid and comfort from 'The Car Belongs to Mother,' and it should be prescribed reading for all husbands. Every family with a car will give mother a copy of this book.

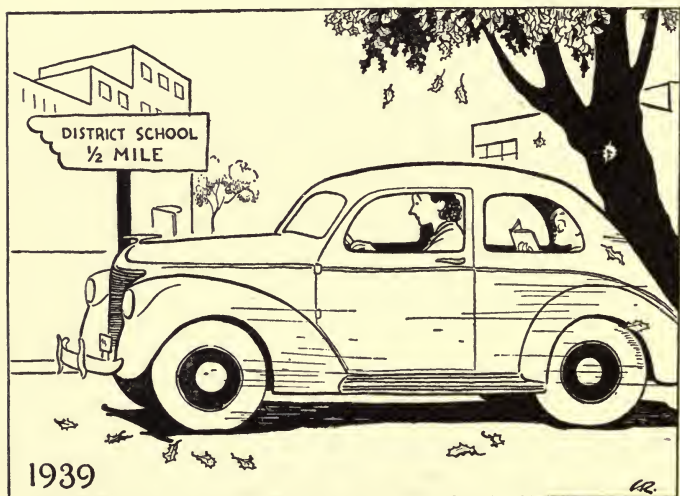
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T H E C A R
B E L O N G S
T O

Mother



Note on a half-century of progress in child education

THE CAR BELONGS TO
Mother

By Priscilla Hovey Wright

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY CARL ROSE

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY · BOSTON

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TO
H. F. W.

WITH WHOM I
OCCASIONALLY SHARE
THE CAR

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F O R E W O R D

IT ALWAYS saddened the author to hear a man announce with apparent malice, 'You might know it's a woman driving!'

There was something back of this ungallant attitude, she felt sure; some obscure, psychological reason. Finally she diagnosed it as an especially bitter and baffling brand of frustration. Man is the acknowledged master of the machine. Not one major machine has ever been invented by Woman. Yet Man, the master and inventor, is forced by the economic and social conditions of daily living, to turn the darlings of his brain over to Woman, who, knowing nothing about them, understanding their inner workings not one whit, nevertheless makes them go — and how and or else!

The great difference between the sexes, indeed, is that Man is interested in *how* things work and

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Woman in how *she* can make them work. One can readily picture Mrs. Galileo tiptoeing into her husband's study after the great man was safely on his way to a meeting, and, intuitively turning the little dagnabbits on his latest model telescope, focussing it, not on the stars, but with unerring accuracy on the courtyards of neighboring villas.

This uncanny, unscientific ability to make things go is carried into every realm of the modern household. Many a vacuum cleaner has been made to live far longer than its manufacturers ever intended it should, simply because Woman with hairpin, razor blade, nail file and embroidery scissors, spurred it into a rally — a hectic, unhealthy rally doubtless, but a rally notwithstanding.

Man sees the automobile, invented by him, improved by him, fashioned for his pride and pleasure, become, as he believes, the plaything of Woman. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that he glares when his suburban neighbor backs out in front of him unseeing because of a back seat full of card tables for the Community Club bridge party.

Because the author feels that she has at last

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fathomed Man's disrespectful attitude toward the woman driver, she attempts to touch upon a few of the many problems which beset the latter. Naturally she does not attempt to include the problems of women drivers of all walks of life. Single women, women with chauffeurs, married women with cars of their own to do with as they will — these may have their imaginary trials.

She deals, rather, with the problems of the matron — and her name is truly legion — who, with the one family car at her disposal, transports her husband to and from trains, her children to school, herself to market, club members to their homes on unaccepted streets and relatives on their various whims and vagaries. Truly this woman is a gallant creature, a creature of wit and resourcefulness, of nerve and verve. May she receive consolation and help from these humble pages and may Man, after reading them, meet her more respectfully upon the road and reverently exclaim, 'God wot. A woman driving!'

CHAPTER I

The Chauffeuring of Husbands

HEIGH-HO! HEIGH-HO!
TO THE CHOO-CHOO WE WILL GO!

THERE should be something in the marriage contract that covers train taxiing of husbands, something like — ‘Do you, Elizabeth Anne, promise in fair weather and in foul, to get John Henry to the seven-forty-five or whatever train his job requireth him to get, so help me Hannah.’ Still, a disillusioning clause such as this would mean fewer marriages, a lower birth rate, and a marked decline in suburban property values. Better that woman should continue to bend her back to the yoke, and keep her hand on the throttle.

There are husbands, it is true, who have a little car of their own in which they dash to the train or even drive all the way to the city. We

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are not concerned with them; nor with husbands who live on a bus line or in the city itself. We are concerned wholly with the suburban husbands who live too far from the station to walk to it and who wouldn't walk to it, anyway.

They make a great show of saying that they leave the car at home so that the little woman may have it during the day for her own pleasure, but in reality they are selfishly thinking only of themselves. For them the comfort and leisure of the train where they can smoke and read and play cards. No straining of eyes on the road, no outwitting of traffic lights, no angling for a place to park. Not for them. They leave the car at home for the little woman. Wise guys!

Usually the husband does the driving *to* the station. There comes that moment in the chaos of family breakfast when he gulps his final gulp, dashes to the hall, courses back into the dining-room with coat on but unbuttoned, hat balanced on the back of his head, waves the car keys in his wife's face and grunts at her incoherently before running out of the back door.

The wife has received her cue and acts upon it. Leaving toast and coffee unfinished, she rushes to the back hall and flings on a coat kept espe-

The Chauffeuring of Husbands

cially for the morning run. It is ancient but comfortable and looks especially fetching worn over house coats and pajamas. On her head is rammed an ancient hat or tied a kerchief. Speed is the essential thing now, not style. To the other members of the family she addresses a running fire of orders while thus assembling herself.

'Sister, you start your practising. You've got fifteen minutes left over from yesterday. Brother, go right back upstairs and comb your hair. No, you didn't. You *couldn't* have.'

Often there is someone too young to be left behind, some helpless mite who must be snatched from his high chair, applesauce and cereal still on his innocent face. Grabbing clothing of sorts, the mother thrusts him into it, pulls something down on his head so he can't see, seizes his hand and rushes out the front door with him just as her husband shoots from the garage down the driveway.

The husband glares at his wife and child. He doesn't even kick the door open for them. They're expected to stumble and stagger in as best they may. Almost at once, as he savagely shifts and starts down the street, he unleashes a



Speed is the essential thing now, not style

The Chauffeuring of Husbands

flood of recriminations, of which the following are samples:

'You must have been cock-eyed when you drove in last night. The car was so far over to one side I almost scraped the paint off getting out!'

'What in heaven's name is all that junk on the back seat! I swear every car we have is turned into a dump truck!'

'Who's been gumming up all the windows? Dog been lapping 'em, probably. I distinctly gave orders that mut was *not* to get in the car!'

'Light on in the garage again! A sweet bill we'll have next month.'

The young, inexperienced wife very naturally is sensitive and feels that she must refute these accusations, pointing out that it was the husband who drove in last, that the dog hasn't been in the car for weeks, that the junk on the back seat is a suit of his she intended to get to the cleaner's yesterday. The wife of a few years' standing, however, wisely says nothing. Instead she calmly plans the menu for the day, realizing that this is but a necessary part of the morning run. Sometimes, it is true, she feels obliged to murmur gently, 'John, remember

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Junior!' Even this is a mistake. John immediately remembers Junior. He stares at his child with bloodshot eyes and barks, 'For the love of Mike, keep that mug away from my coat!'

In such wise is progress made to the station. The husband drives into the station yard and stops with vicious abruptness, wriggles out from behind the wheel and plants a gesture of sorts on his wife's nose and his child's ear. Then he is on the platform and into the station to buy his paper. The wife wiggles into the place he has vacated, props Junior up beside her and looks about her. In the yard friends are arriving whom she will meet later in the day, at market, at bridge parties, at the club. They will be gay and poised then, but now they are too haggard and harried to do more than wave feebly at her. She would gladly turn and depart for home, but Junior insists upon seeing the train leave, and certainly something is due the child. Indeed, it will be interesting in later years to note the impressions retained by suburban children upon reaching manhood. The child snatched from his crib to flee marauding Indians had an easy time of it compared to the modern

The Chauffeuring of Husbands

child pulled daily from his porridge and forced to see Daddy take the choo-choo!

Some readers may feel that the presence of an outsider would exert a soothing influence upon the morning run. Such is not the case. Theoretically it would be pouring oil upon the troubled waters; practically it is pouring it upon fiercely glowing flames.

Let us take, by way of illustration, the case of Mr. Smith on a slippery morning. The husband careens out of the driveway. His wife, in the meantime, shivering with Junior beside her, has spied Mr. Smith across the street. Mr. Smith has just executed an adagio step on the ice. Her Good Samaritan spirit is aroused.

'John,' she says, 'I'm going to call to Mr. Smith. He almost broke his neck just then.'

And far better if he had!

John grunts and the wife carols,

'Oh, Mr. Smi-ith. Won't you ride with us?'

Mr. Smith will. He gets in the back seat and heartily begins conversation. If he would only get in and sit glumly in a grouch! But he feels he must be bright and cheerful. This is a common failing of pedestrians and does more than anything else to keep them pedestrians.

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'Don't mind if I do this morning,' he says breezily. 'Usually nothing stops me from getting my walk to the station. That fifteen minutes in the fresh air — boy, it braces me up for the whole day. I tell my wife, I say, "No, don't spoil me by taking me down. I'm indoors all day. I want the exercise."' '

This, of course, is a crack at your husband and indirectly at you. You see a cold fury rising in your husband's eyes. He must perforce be polite to Mr. Smith, while all the time he is like a corked bottle in which effervescent powder is working without an outlet. You, too, must graciously respond to Mr. Smith's inanities instead of concentrating upon the day's marketing. Junior feels the repressed antagonism and, leaning over the seat, runs his tongue out at Mr. Smith, who calls him in less jovial tones a 'rascal' and a 'tyke.' At the station your husband neglects the usual conjugal salute and, although it was never anything that Hollywood would recognize, you miss it and feel slighted.

The second morning you have forgotten about Mr. Smith, but Mr. Smith has not forgotten about you. He is there and it is still slippery. Obviously there is nothing to do but take him

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in. You shout across the road a bit meaningly, 'Want to come, Mr. Smith, or are you walking?'

Mr. Smith is riding and with you. He is especially cheerful. He talks about a radio programme he heard the night previous — the Baloney Boys, Bill and Bosco. If there is one programme your husband can't stand, it is that of the Baloney Boys. Mr. Smith, however, is an ardent Baloney fan. He tells in detail just what Bill said to Bosco and what Bosco said to Bill. Your husband takes a turn in the road with such recklessness that you close your eyes and hold Junior tightly to you.

That morning your husband not only does not peck at you, but he is behind his paper when the train pulls out and does not wave.

The third day dawns and there is Mr. Smith. You know he has been peeking from his front porch, watching for the exact moment your husband entered the garage so that he might dash down the street in time to saunter along as you came out of the house. Your husband leans out of the car and growls,

'Have I got to cart that old billy goat the rest of my life!'

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This morning Mr. Smith discusses the Administration and it invariably occurs that if he is in favor of it, your husband is against it, or *vice versa*. You do not linger in the station yard. You fear your husband may hurl himself in the path of the approaching train and if he does you had far rather learn of it later from kindly strangers. You resolve, however, that Mr. Smith must go out of your life and your car!

There are two ways of accomplishing this. The easier but more cowardly way is that of going for an earlier or later train. Obviously, this disturbs your household schedule and your husband's business routine and works untold hardships on all concerned.

The braver and more open way is to start the morning run promptly on schedule *but* with the back seat arranged with card tables, old-fashioned lamps, sundry bric-à-brac and especially enormous old pictures covered with dust and protruding hooks, wires, and nails. Then say,

'I don't know whether you can squeeze in or not, Mr. Smith, but you're welcome if you can.'

Often Mr. Smith will decide against it, but in stubborn cases, he gets in.

In this event you have in front additional

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bundles and odd articles like umbrellas, curtain rods, and flatirons. You smilingly ask Mr. Smith if he minds holding these for you, because Junior is such an armful. Mr. Smith may decide he'd rather hold Junior. If so, Junior can be trusted to do his part without coaching — wiping his shoes on Mr. Smith's trousers, his fingers on Mr. Smith's collar and tie and his mouth and nose on Mr. Smith's coat sleeves.

If Mr. Smith still sounds undaunted, nudge your husband. This means that he is to take a certain bump in a certain way. His answering nod is imperceptible to all but you. The bump comes, that little place in the road that the highway department neglected to iron out. Your husband manoeuvres it with magnificent skill and a burst of speed.

In spite of the cargo on the back seat, Mr. Smith rises, his immaculately creased felt hat is crushed against the top of the car, his teeth, if they are legitimate, clamp neatly on his tongue, and if false, fall out — at least the uppers.

You can now rest assured, as you see him stagger from the car and feel his way into the ticket office, that he will hereafter find it more healthful to walk.

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There are, of a truth, two times in the life of husband and wife when the presence of an outsider is not wanted. One is on their honeymoon. The other is on the morning run to the seven-forty-five.

The trip homeward at night is a different matter. It is the rainbow after the storm, twilight after the heat and stress of the day.

You have just driven in from a bridge party. You look your prettiest as you wait in the station yard. There is a minion at home looking after both the dinner and the little ones. You have culled perky little sprigs of news in the conversational garden at the party with which to beguile your husband.

There he is, swinging off the train. You beam at him. He beams at you. He has had enough of the city. His own fireside is all he desires plus the presence of his beloved ones. He sees no flaws as beside you he drives homeward. Fill the car up now, if you will, with your Mr. Smiths and with the attractive young office workers in the neighborhood. Your husband regards them with distant benevolence. Drive in a bit close to the left-hand side and neglect to turn off the light. It doesn't matter now!

CHAPTER II

School Chauffeuring

A CAR FULL OF DOGS,
A CAR FULL OF CATS.
A CAR FULL OF YOURS
AND THE NEIGHBORS' BRATS!

SCHOOL CHAUFFEURING is one of the most vicious practices of the present day. It is undermining not only the stamina of the rising generation, but also destroying what little remains of the vitality of the present generation. The reasons for it seem to be, first, that schoolhouses are never near the house you bought and, second, that modern children are appallingly puny. In spite of being stuffed with vitamins and spotlighted with violet rays, the child of today is utterly unable to stand up to a raindrop, a snowdrop, or a drop in Fahrenheit.

In some smart suburban sections there is actually a system whereby the mother's car is an-

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nounced as it draws up to the door, the child's name called out and the little one bundled in so that he does not get as much as the end of his nose damp. What are we raising, anyway!

Even in good weather there's the question of the noonday meal, and mothers, who in their own youth raced happily and healthily home to luncheon, now declare that Brother and Sister would get indigestion by so doing and dash down to school at twelve o'clock and bring them home. It's easy to see who gets the indigestion.

One of the phases of school chauffeuring that leads into all sorts of major entanglements is caused, as you would guess, by the neighbors' children. There are always several women in the neighborhood, cowardly souls who have never learned to drive or shrewd, cagey people who insist upon their husband's taking the car with them, or who can't leave the baby or the goldfish or something. Their children are your children's pals and what can you do!

What you inevitably do is drive home with eight or nine children, three in front with you, thrusting into your face papers with stars on them, seeds to sell, tickets for the Punch and

School Chauffeuring

Judy show, and notices of Parent-Teacher meetings. In back are six demons, two leaning light-heartedly against the doors and four fighting for possession of the seat.

Wrestling matches are staged daily, pictures traced on the windows in steamy weather, while gum and jelly beans are cached anywhere. Two or three times a week caps are flung from the rear windows, and at least once a year somebody's finger gets jammed. It is always the finger of a neighbor's child, and although the neighbor is polite about it, she invariably looks as if she had a suspicion you deliberately slammed the door on it yourself.

In some neighborhoods a plan of reciprocity is worked out. Rather, it is tried out, but it seldom works. The idea is this: Mrs. Jones does the school chauffeuring the first week, taking her own, Mrs. Smith's and Mrs. Brown's children and their dependents; Mrs. Smith steps into the cab the second week with the above clientèle; Mrs. Brown assumes charge the third week.

The plan is clearly commendable. Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Jones, and Mrs. Brown each have a week at hard labor and two weeks in which to recuperate. It always happens, however, that

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when Mrs. Smith is in charge, an old aunt dies, out of town, of course, and she has to go to the funeral. She calls up Mrs. Jones, who is coolly sympathetic, but states she had planned to go to the city and has made a date with the hair-dresser in the bargain. Mrs. Brown is caught with no excuse, but resentment smolders in her soul and she forthwith plans on her week to have an ulcerated tooth.

So it goes, and in a month's time all three are back on the job, sturdy individualists. Many women avoid incipient breakdowns by simply stopping school chauffeuring, ruthlessly sending their children off with cold lunches and daring them to get indigestion or anything else. The neighbors' children survive this Spartan treatment, but your own always do catch something out of spite.

School chauffeuring has its bright side, however. Many firm friendships are formed among the chauffeurs, who otherwise might not know one another. They exchange news and recipes as they park conveniently abreast or at casual angles in the school yard and in the street in front. Many a man principal looks forth and shudders at the apparently hopeless tangle of cars, and

School Chauffeuring

laundrymen, bakers, milkmen, and the like always avoid school districts between the hours of eleven-forty-five and twelve-fifteen. Unimaginative as they are, they can see nothing clever and amusing in the ability of two women jockeying their cars so that, without shutting off the motors or putting on the brakes, they can draw alongside each other in the middle of the road and pass through the open windows boxes containing costumes for school plays or cakes for food sales.

Yet leave the girls to themselves and everything goes off like clockwork, not a fender or bumper scratched and the school yard cleared with swiftness and skill. Let one man come into the yard, however, and there is sure to be trouble.

Taxi-men are exempt from this accusation. They know the girls' vagaries and can weave their way in and out without disaster, although they don't always look as genial as they might. Let one lone father, home for the day and eager to help, drive in, and pandemonium reigns. He utterly fails to grasp the spirit of informality and camaraderie that prevails. When he sees what is to him a jigsaw puzzle of cars, he im-

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mediately becomes outraged and panic-stricken, and in two minutes has turned a peaceful social school yard into a madhouse of honking horns and locked bumpers. Women whose husbands are home for the day would do well to give them the task of stirring the noonday soup and dash down to school themselves. It's easier and safer.

Although the transportation to day school is the major issue, there are the minor, lesser, but equally evil problems of getting the children to and from dancing school, music and elocution lessons — for they must have their culture! — as well as the dentist and barber. Except in the case of dancing school, the neighbors' children fade out of the picture, simplifying it somewhat. There should be a special word, however, on Sunday School which, in this streamlined age, is held at an hour when most self-respecting people would be leisurely sipping their coffee and looking over the rotogravure section.

Just how there can be Sabbath calm in a household when parents must drag themselves from well-earned rest, put Eton collars and patent-leather shoes on reluctant offspring, give them clean handkerchiefs and what spare change can be found in the father's pockets for benevolence,

School Chauffeuring

and then tear with them a mile to church, is extremely doubtful. Often the father is the chauffeur on this trip, grimly clutching the wheel and swearing, not always under his breath. There is sure to come a day, however, when the rector, hawking for prospective members of the Men's Club, comes sociably to the car and leans in for a little chat. He can't fail to observe bare legs, slippered feet, and the gay flounce of a pajama jacket worn beneath a golf sweater. The father's pride is offended and he henceforth passes the job over to the mother, who is accustomed in the morning to looking like an advance location scout for a band of gypsies. Once again Woman takes up the wheel! Indeed, it is seldom out of her hands!

*Chauffeuring of Club and
Church Members*

CLUB MEMBERS NEED A HELPING HAND
AS HOMEWARD THEY WOULD PASS,
AND CHURCH BELLS TOLL A DREARY KNELL
FOR THOSE WHO BUY THE GAS.

WOMEN should go into club work with their eyes open and a tank full of gasoline. Although figures are not available, it is roughly estimated that a good fifty-seven and seven-ninths per cent of a club roster has to be transported. The burden that rests upon the remaining forty-two and two-ninths per cent is at once seen to be tremendous. Nobly the girls respond to it. You can see them on a club afternoon, stylishly hatted, cloaked, and gloved, driving in droves to the clubhouse, each five-passenger car with two extra women in front — those who imagi-

Chauffeuring of Club and Church Members

natively call themselves 'small' — and three in back who are admittedly not small. Sometimes a very plump one is placed in front with the driver and the two small ones are wedged in back with the two large ones.

These women are all gay and laughing. They don't have to worry whether or not they've blocked Doctor Morton's driveway across the street, parked too near a hydrant, or left the keys in the car. They can enjoy the meeting in blissful serenity and after it is over placidly await transportation homeward. Not for them the task of starting a cold recalcitrant motor, of avoiding fender and bumper trouble. They calmly sit back, not on their laurels, but anyway, they sit back and leave the rest to you. And try to get rid of one of them at the corner of her street. It simply can't be done. Cannily she suspects your intention and says:

'That's my house up there, Mrs. Smith. The fourth one on the right, with the blue blinds.'

These people, as can be readily seen, become very spoiled as time goes on. Some even develop front-seat or near-the-window-itis, saying that the vibration gives them a headache or worse. The woman chauffeur must adjust all these var-

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ied personalities to one another as well as to the springs of the car.

On the Club Outing, this is an especially acute problem. The Outing is held at a club member's summer home not less than sixty miles distant. The president terms it Mrs. So-and-So's generous offer, but all Mrs. So-and-So has to do is clean house, get out her guest towels, and borrow chairs. The brunt of the affair is borne by those who arrange transportation. Everybody is enthusiastic about the Outing except those who have to drive there and back.

Some husbands, after tire trouble on the Outing of the year before or, more tragic, 'ticket' trouble, have been known to put their feet flatly down on the neck of this year's Outing. The wives then call up the chairman on arrangements and with hypocritical sorrow state that John simply has to have the car that day. Others blithely tell tales of engine trouble, sickness in the family, and what-not.

There is a valiant group, however, who because of club spirit or an amusing desire to unload more on Mrs. So-and-So than she was expecting, push the excursion through. They usually have a committee meeting or two in ad-

Chauffeuring of Club and Church Members

vance and divide the parasites, thusly: one mouselike person who likes to look at the scenery for the front seat; two plump people for the rear end seats to balance the springs; one talker for the middle.

It is very bad policy to have the talker on the front seat. She is forever craning her neck so that those in the back may not miss her words of wisdom and, becoming tired of turning it one way, she turns it another. This revolving motion is upsetting to the driver and is more than anything else the cause for driving through red lights on Outing Day.

With the talker in the rear, wedged securely in between two stout girls, so that she can't twist and turn, the chauffeur is more at ease. She doesn't miss any of the conversation. Indeed, it floats right over to her and she and the mouselike person placidly looking at scenery can enjoy a quiet suck at a private hoard of life-savers.

Of course this system is often thrown completely out of gear because the passengers don't realize that everything has been prearranged for them. They insist on indulging their little peculiarities and prejudices. They become cramped



Method for calculating seating arrangement
on Club Outings

Chauffeuring of Club and Church Members

and brightly suggest changing positions — giving little thought to the driver who sits in one place for the trek of sixty miles down and sixty more back. Or, as has been previously mentioned, they develop acute cases of window-itis, complaining of headache or gas on the stomach. One wishes that the question of gas in the tank were as easily remedied.

Wealthy club members simply pack up and go South in the winter when club work is at its height. They are not to be blamed. For those who must stay at home, the best thing to do is take periodic vacations. On a day, for example, when the club calendar announces a lecture on 'Early Morning Bird Walks,' simply pick up the telephone, croak into the ear of one of your regular passengers that you can hardly lift your head from your pillow, and ask her to pass the word along. You can then relax when afternoon comes, enjoy a good book, or, slyly peeping from your windows, refresh yourself with the sight of one of your albatrosses walking. It's best not to sneak out yourself, however. Invariably you'll get caught.

Church work presents much the same problems. There are the clubs to which the usual

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helpless quota must be carried. There are the annual outings, possibly on a lesser scale than the Club Outing. There is the Sunday School picnic which must be eschewed from the start. There are the bridge parties for which card tables must be collected and returned. There are the suppers to which red-hot pots of beans and cauldrons of scalloped oysters must be brought, precariously perched beside one or balanced upon the lap. And nothing is more disruptive to a spirit of piety than a fugitive bean slithering steamily down the frock unless it is a bloated be-crackered oyster taking refuge inside the overshoe.

The rummage sale should not be overlooked. Often a woman plans to store the collected mess overnight on the back seat only to find that she has to meet a train to bring Aunt Etta and Uncle Charlie up to supper. Usually she feels like touching a match to it.

Probably the most dismal dilemma of all, however, is caused by the Black Sheep. Ministers, true to their calling, are always searching for those missing members of the fold, instead of making life pleasant and easy for those who are in it. When a minister gets on the trail of a

Chauffeuring of Club and Church Members

Black Sheep, he nips and barks at her until he gets her in. There is no stopping him. The trouble is he expects help from the White Sheep to accomplish his purpose.

We will take the typical case of Mrs. Peckersniff. The minister calls on you one afternoon and after a few moments of general conversation, broaches the subject of Mrs. Peckersniff. He has sniffed out a quarry. It seems, he says, that Mrs. Peckersniff once went to church in the time of his predecessor, but there was trouble of a sort. He doesn't know what it was and, after all, that isn't the point. The important thing is that she would now like to come again. The difficulty is, she doesn't drive and her husband is away most of the time and she lives rather at a distance and isn't very well and . . . You stiffen. You can see it coming. She lives not very far from you, he goes on, possibly a half-mile up Hawkins Hill and he thought you might — just might — be good enough to take her Sunday morning. You stiffen, but you don't jell. He is so helpless and hopeful-looking that you yield. After all, one Sunday morning won't hurt you.

You discover that Mrs. Peckersniff lives at the top of the hill with an especially diabolical

The Car Belongs to Mother

driveway. She is stout and a bit breathless as she regales you with the tale of why she left the fold in the first place, but she seems virile and vigorous in every way. At the church, a delegation of White Sheep, rounded up by the minister, greets her cordially. This is the usual technique employed on Black Sheep and is admittedly bad for them, making them feel the drama and importance of their position. Mrs. Peckersniff feels it. The color is high in her cheeks as you drive her home. Although you shrewdly don't commit yourself in regard to future services, you have as good as signed a contract and you know it.

Not only does Mrs. Peckersniff intend to go to church every Sunday, but to join in the activities of the various organizations as well. She is like an old firehorse who has been grazing in tranquil pastures and who now smells cinders and hears the familiar gong in his ears and is snorting to go. She wants to be a worker and all she demands is that someone get her to the scene of her work and get her back. If you miss her at morning service, you get hooked at evensong or at the Helping Hand social.

In two weeks' time, Mrs. Peckersniff is a familiar fixture in your car. In fact, the back

Chauffeuring of Club and Church Members

seat has a particular groove, a valley in which only she can fit. She becomes offended if you're a little late, or if in backing out of her fiendish driveway, you run into her barberry bushes. Her tongue wags happily when she is on the road. She is in the fold!

And now is the time for you to step out of it! Of course, if you choose, you can remain in and jar Mrs. Peckersniff out. An entertaining trick is to borrow a beach wagon and transport her in that. In spite of the fact that beach wagons are the thing now, you will find that Mrs. Peckersniff doesn't like riding in one. A slight degree of rough treatment, such as taking bumps and corners a bit carelessly, and letting her wait in the rain may afford *you* satisfaction, but is usually not stringent enough to daunt *her*. And if you employ the same procedure as was outlined in the case of Mr. Smith, it will be just like her to become actually injured and sue you. There is the hope, of course, that she will shortly tire, that her initial burst of steam will subside, or that she may again take umbrage. With this prospect in view, you can even have a friend of yours make a slighting remark about a cake she has brought to the food sale.

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The best and easiest method, however, is the old grippe gag or engine trouble or husband-has-to-have-the-car. And if you stay away long enough you'll become a Black Sheep yourself and be able to enjoy all the flattery and attention when you creep back into the fold. At any rate, it's worth trying.

CHAPTER IV

Chauffeuring of Relatives

AUNTS AND UNCLES, COUSINS, TOO,
LIKE TO RIDE AND GET THE VIEW.

RELATIVES deserve a fair amount of consideration. After all, blood is thicker than water. Sometimes it is a bit too thick and acts as carbon in the connubial machinery. Relative chauffeuring is roughly of two classes — formal and informal. In the formal classification may be grouped such well-known and delicate events as the Thanksgiving and Christmas reunions, the Sunday dinner and the summer picnic. In the informal bracket are those little trips of from one hundred to two hundred miles so that Uncle Charlie can look at the mountains, Aunt Etta hunt for salt shakers at antique auctions, and Cousin Lulu smell the sea.

It is easy to see that the formal work is by far

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the easier. Hence it is almost invariably taken over by the husband. At clan gatherings a patriarchal mantle seems to fall on his shoulders. Along with the carving of the Thanksgiving turkey or the Sunday roast comes a feeling of authority, a sort of head-of-the-house squaring of the shoulders. Staunchedly, if not cheerfully, he goes afield to gather his or your relatives or both. You watch him go with relief, while you get on with the dinner, and make no suggestions as to how he shall handle Aunt Min who becomes nervous if the speedometer registers more than twenty-five miles an hour, or little Edward who behaves worse than your own children, or Cousin Ella who insists on bringing her dog.

At the family picnics in the summer, the man is usually at the wheel, too. Not only is this necessary since the woman is on the back seat buried to her eyebrows in baskets of provender, but because of the husband's desperate but futile propaganda against family picnics. It is strange that relatives themselves don't become aware of these efforts at undermining a good old American institution.

Take the time, for instance, when your husband parked in such a manner that the car sank

Chauffeuring of Relatives

in the beach sand to a degree that Uncle Al, who never lifts a finger, had to put his shoulder to the wheels and push. And it was a queer sort of absent-mindedness that made him lose his way to Lake Loonavista, which Cousin Lulu adored and had selected as the site of the picnic, and end up at Harry's Pavilion near which there was a golf course. And an equally suspicious coincidence that his clubs were in the trunk.

Informal chauffeuring is much more uncertain and venturesome. After all, reunions and picnics are planned in advance and one can steel one's courage to meet them. On one of the first spring mornings, however, when you are zestfully setting about a bit of cleaning, Aunt Min is sure to call up and tell you she is hankering, simply hankering, for a sight and smell of the country. Wistfully she mentions being bottled in a city apartment, the rigors and loneliness of the winter. She knows the dogwood must be out, the arbutus, the pussy-willow. You know that the *détour* signs will be out as well, the tar wagon and piles of sand, the mud and drain pipes.

You have a longing to tell Aunt Min to keep on hankering. Yet Aunt Min, your conscience

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immediately tells you, is Aunt Min, an older and hence more venerated branch on the family tree than you are. There is also the matter of the mink cape or the highboy, which Aunt Min in mellow, forward and upward-looking moments, has hinted may one day be yours. You tell her you can't get ready this morning, but you think you can right after lunch. Aunt Min shouts vigorously back that she, too, will be ready.

It takes a powerful lot of riding to satisfy her hankering. A mere thirty-mile drive doesn't work the trick, nor does one dogwood tree or one clump of pussy-willow. Aunt Min must needs cover the New England states before she has her fill. The endurance of elderly relatives is indeed remarkable. Uncle Charlie's favorite drive, for instance, taking in as it does not only the waterfront, the mountains, but plenty of both country and city, cripples you for a week afterward, but Uncle Charlie blithely says, when you get him safely to his door, 'I declare, I'd like to start in and do it all over again!'

Relatives also have a penchant for dirt roads and by-paths. You used to, before you drove. Sitting happy and secure beside you or on the



Relatives have a penchant for dirt roads and by-paths

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rear seat, relatives become daring, exploratory-minded. They talk for miles about the fascinating little side roads, and how they'd like to see where they go, and how tiresome it must be for you to stay on the turnpike all the time with the cars whizzing by.

You yield and take the next likely-looking side road. Like all side roads it is put there merely to deceive. Its gleaming new macadam vanishes after fifty feet, changing to macadam of a previous town administration. This also changes in a mile or so and you are now on honest but bumpy soil. From then on you may as well use your compass or go by dead reckoning because there'll be no signs on the many cross-roads you'll meet, except those that point skyward or downward or at each other.

The annoying part of it all is that, while you're struggling to get your bearings, a snatch or two of the conversation (if more than one relative is present) shows you you have sacrificed in vain. In spite of the fact that they were the ones who wanted to get on this pesky road, they are paying absolutely no attention to it. No, they're sorry, but they can't remember that gray barn with the cat in front of it. They might

Chauffeur-ing of Relatives

have passed it before, but they're not sure. And besides, they're leaving everything to you, dear, and just enjoying themselves. Even a single relative is of no assistance. When you press her for her opinion as to whether you're headed north or south, she comes out of her trance long enough to say she was trying to compose a slogan for Komfort Kream and so win the first prize of ten thousand dollars and a trip to the Gobi Desert.

By capturing a stray native and getting his help you may be lucky enough to end up on the turnpike about ten miles from where you were in the first place, and headed in the wrong direction.

Family reunions don't give relatives scope enough, but informal excursions clearly give them too much. They mustn't be indulged for their own good nor must they be treated roughly. The problem of chauffeur-ing them, therefore, remains and probably will remain, largely unsolved.

CHAPTER V

Chauffeuring of Pedestrians

PEDESTRIANS ARE WILY,
AND CLEVER TO ENSNARE
THE HUMBLE, HELPLESS MOTORIST,
SO GIVE THEM ALL THE AIR.

THE only safe people to pick up are those you don't know, and, as the papers are careful to point out, they're not at all safe, because they're so likely to steal your watch or hit you over the head or force you to take them to some den of vice or hold up a factory. Yet even granting the possibility of violence, it is still less dangerous in many ways to pick up the unknown pedestrian than the known. The unknown fades out of your life quickly even though he may fade with all the change in your pocketbook, while the known, even the casually known, is on his way to being forever with you.

This chapter deals with the perils of picking

Chauffeur-ing of Pedestrians

up the pedestrian who is known to you simply as 'the woman with the awful hats,' or 'the cute little man with the whiskers,' or 'the woman who lives in the third brown house.' There comes a day when driving home from marketing you come upon from the rear 'the woman with the awful hats.' She, too, has been marketing, although she hasn't had nearly the trying time you have had, what with the strain of parking in three different places. With true pedestrian trickery, however, she manages to look pathetically fatigued and fumbles with her bundles in a clumsy manner. The average motorist is a sentimentalist, especially the woman driver. You pull up behind her and say pleasantly,

'Going my way?'

After all, you know her in a fashion and are only being neighborly.

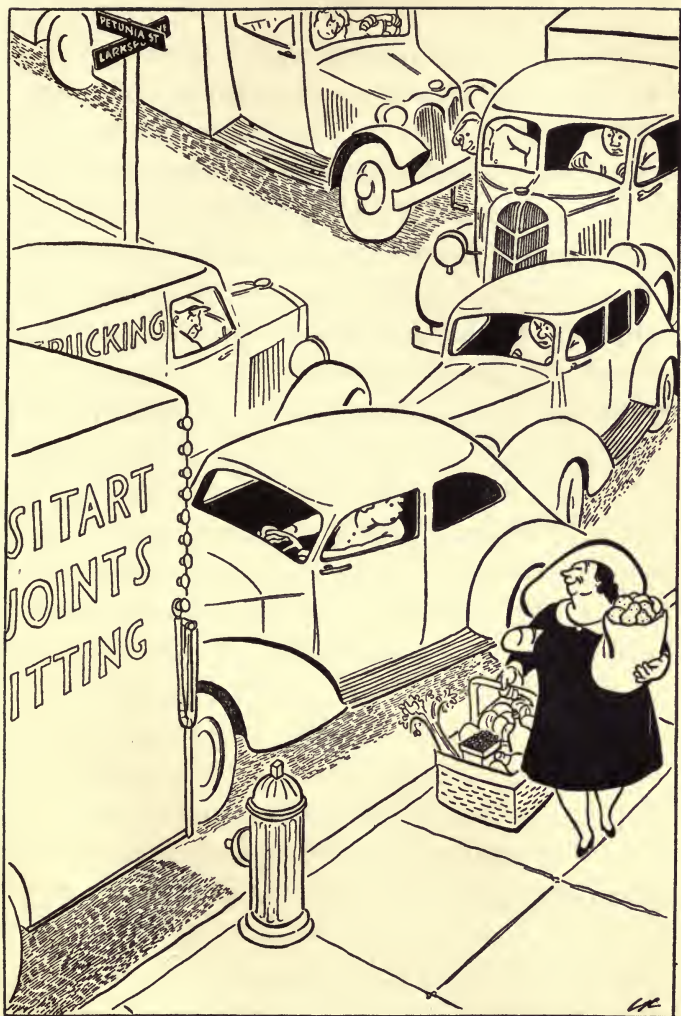
She thanks you breathlessly (this is all put on) and gets in. Pleasantly but impersonally you exchange comments on the weather. You also exchange names and ask her where it will be convenient for you to drop her off. That night you tell your husband you've discovered the identity of 'the woman with the awful hats.' It is Mrs. Dobbles and she lives on the next

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street. So far as you're concerned, however, Mrs. Dobbles has no further significance. But hasn't she!

It's only the very next day or the day after that that you again meet her on her way home from marketing. This time she has more bundles. In fact, she adds one more a day. This time you hesitate. You're perfectly willing to pick her up, but you were just on the point of passing a truck and there's a man behind you who wants to pass both you and the truck. Just as you are vacillating, Mrs. Dobbles turns. Uncanny how a pedestrian turns at just the right time! She sees you and smiles. She even edges nearer the curbing. There's nothing to do but stop and you have to stop rather suddenly. The man behind you passes with a violent swerve, muttering and glaring. Presumably he didn't see your signal. Or did you give any? Anyway, he is so busy looking back at you that he fails to see the car approaching from the opposite direction. Horns honk, brakes screech, motors stall, and the two men glare at each other, while the truck goes merrily on and Mrs. Dobbles gets in and says conversationally,

'It's not safe to be on the road these days, is it!'



Uncanny how a pedestrian turns at just the right time!

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Even as in the case of Mr. Smith and Mrs. Peckersniff, Mrs. Dobbles is on her way to becoming a problem. You have a well-founded suspicion that she deliberately walks up and down the street with a bag of potatoes and a bag of onions, lying in wait for you. This proprietary instinct of pedestrians grows at an alarming rate. Give a pedestrian an inch and he takes the whole back seat.

In the case of these casual pedestrians, the woman motorist should take a firm stand. They're not relatives or friends and can hence be treated with more severity. Of course it would be easier to go marketing at a different hour or take a different route home, but there must come a day when you take the bit between your teeth and pass Mrs. Dobbles, bundles and all.

You'll hear from it later, never fear. You'll meet her at the little store at the corner and she'll greet you pleasantly but coolly:

'I saw you coming home the other day, but I guess you didn't see me, for you drove right along.'

Pathos is in her voice, but pay no attention to it. Be firm. Reply with equal amiability but with a ring of decisive finality that you can't see

Chauffeur-ing of Pedestrians

a thing without your glasses (if you don't wear them) or that you can't see a thing with your glasses (if you wear them). Then continue to hold fast to your policy of passing her. It will be hard. She may even take to carrying bags of coal and practically fainting when she hears an approaching motor. Pedestrians, it is noted, have very keen ears and constantly train them. Be bold! In your path may also be 'the cute little man with the whiskers' struggling home with a garden hose and a bag of fertilizer, or 'the woman in the third brown house' with a hatbox and a carton of baby chickens. Pass them by. Pedestrians must be kept on the sidewalks!

Fender and Bumper Trouble

A LOVER IS ALWAYS TRUE AND TENDER,
UNTIL HIS LOVED-ONE DENTS HIS FENDER.

STATISTICS prove that women, as drivers, are involved in fewer major accidents than are men. The broad statement could therefore be made that it is safer to drive with women than with men, if you're interested in the security of your neck. If, however, you cringe when the battle-cry of bumpers is heard or the screeching of a wounded fender, you had better trust yourself to the men.

Fender and bumper trouble is the chief bane of the woman driver, and is caused by her heroic but fruitless endeavor to master the purely male art of parking and backing. Woman was never made to park and back. Automobile manufacturers have tried to help her. Not so many years

Fender and Bumper Trouble

ago, for example, a woman could not only dent a fender masterfully and cave in a bumper, but she could slice off wheel caps, and smash head and tail lights as well. Under the guise of style, new lines and so on, the manufacturers have cleverly and successfully protected wheels and lights, so that about all a woman can hit *are* fenders and bumpers. Of course she can do a good job on them. Still the situation *is* better.

A great many women drivers will probably boil with indignation at this seeming indictment of their sex while the men will chuckle maliciously. That is not at all the purpose of this book. Indeed, what is sought is a greater understanding between the sexes. And if woman simply can't park and back, she should accept the inevitable with good grace and man should treat her with kindly patience and not bellow at her, 'Come on... straighten out now... straight... no, not over to the right!... bear left, left... now straight... oh, for the...' And so on until he gets run over as he deserves to be.

A busy city street is a good demonstration ground for the difference between the parking and backing technique of the sexes. There is a

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lone space and toward it comes a man driving. Leisurely he manoeuvres his machine with motions not only accurate but smooth and graceful. In a matter of seconds he is in — so many inches in front, so many behind. Perfect. There is another space and toward it comes a woman driving. She halts abruptly upon seeing it, then starts for it. Her motions are hurried, uncertain. She hangs her head far out of the window to get the lay of the land and then doesn't get it. Traffic becomes snarled as she shoots back and forth in the road. Finally she decides to back in whether or no. In the process she gives the rear fender of the car in front a whack and rams into the front bumper of the car behind. She is in, however, and so are the two cars with her. In such wise does fender and bumper trouble become epidemic.

The shrewd woman doesn't park horizontally unless she can get a favored position, i.e., with a driveway or white area in front of her or behind her. In the event she can't find such a choice spot, she wisely parks alongside a curb position, but halfway in the middle of the road! This gives the policeman in the square something to think about besides his corns and what he's going to

Fender and Bumper Trouble

have for dinner, and causes the other motorists to drive slowly, thus keeping everybody on his toes.

Vertical parking is much easier for a woman and is more popular in suburban centres than is horizontal parking. Yet even vertical parking is not without its difficulties. With plenty of room between two cars, the average woman can still manage to head in so that when she flings open the door of her car it will crash into the next car. It is well, if possible, to come in between two cars of obvious middle age, for owners of new cars can become very disagreeable about a minor matter such as this.

There is also a way to come in between two cars, a very tricky way — and no woman can explain how it's done — so that the front and rear bumpers of her car slide over or under the front and rear bumpers of one or both of the flanking cars and become inextricably locked with them. The plight isn't discovered until the owner of one of the three cars tries to back out. The situation is often further complicated when the guilty one carefully locks her car and goes off for several hours. In this case, only a garage-man with a jack can free the imprisoned ma-

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chines and it requires all his dexterity plus the advice of Main Street.

So much for parking. Inasmuch as parking involves considerable backing, it would seem superfluous to deal with the latter subject separately. Yet a word or two is necessary upon ordinary home driveway backing, probably the cause of more domestic friction than is admitted in divorce courts. Some women have their husbands back the car out for the morning run, then leave it in front of the house or only a short distance up the driveway for the rest of the day. In extreme bad weather, however, this isn't feasible, and in the case of the new car it constitutes a major crime. Besides, few women admit defeat. Who wouldn't give more than one fender to master a driveway!

The trouble is that most driveways are too straight and too much effort has gone into making them simple and free from obstacles. Woman is a better trick-and-stunt driver than is man — intuitively so. A woman will go confidently down a narrow street with cars parked on either side and trucks coming toward her. Half-closing her eyes or closing them entirely she will weave her way successfully through by

Fender and Bumper Trouble

hair-raising margins. A man, on the other hand, upon confronting a similar situation, will prudently draw up to one side and wait until the difficulties have cleared or until he can figure out his course. In short, woman is adventurous and daring, while man is conservative and conventional.

A prominent psychologist — the mention of his name would astound you! — discovered that his wife was having unwonted trouble backing out of the home driveway. It was a broad, straight driveway, the only trees being at the very end and a good two feet from the edge of the drive. His wife, however, seemed to go purposely up on the lawn to hit first one tree, then the other. The psychologist, being a persistent man and a wise one as well, after much pondering, had the garage moved so that the driver approached it from a sharp angle of sixteen and a half degrees. The drive itself was made narrower and several curves were put in it. He also planted shrubs and young trees close to the edge of it. The results were spectacular. His wife took to it at once, going out with eyes half-closed, one hand resting lightly on the wheel, her feminine intuition guiding her. She hasn't

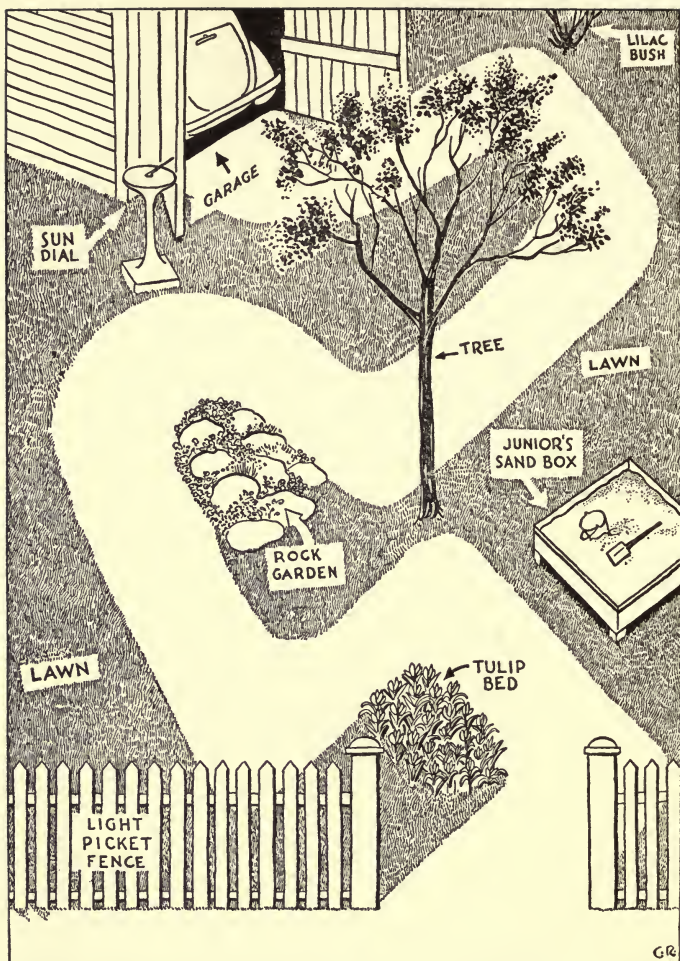


Diagram of home driveway designed by prominent psychologist and successfully used by prominent psychologist's wife without scratching a fender

Fender and Bumper Trouble

scratched a fender yet, but the psychologist has broken a rear axle and two ribs.

It would seem, therefore, that fender and bumper trouble can be lessened greatly if homeowners will arrange the driveway along more novel, challenging lines. Man-made rules of prosaic law and order will unfortunately have to exist in municipal parking areas. Here women will have to conduct themselves as carefully as possible, avoiding the dilemmas outlined above. And then, of course, the manufacturers may very well come forward with something to encircle fenders and bumpers — a fence rail, or possibly, a third rail!

CHAPTER VII

The Right Service Station

THE FRIENDLY MAN IN OUR GARAGE
I LOVE WITH ALL MY HEART.
HE TRUSTS ME FOR MY GASOLINE
AND MAKES MY MOTOR START.

A WOMAN driver's best asset is a service station that understands her, one that makes her feel perfectly at home when buying gasoline in fractions of a gallon, and one to which she can confidently turn on a changeable winter's day when first she wants the chains on, then off, then on again.

Garagemen resent a too-technical attitude on the part of woman. Woman, cognizant of the fact, would do well to play up to it. Let a woman enter a garage and capably state that she thinks the valve tappets need adjusting. She receives a cold, suspicious look and the informa-

The Right Service Station

tion that they're so rushed they can't possibly take care of her. But suppose she goes in smiling graciously and illustrates with a neatly gloved hand and a dramatic voice that the car makes the *queerest* noise, sort of a clickety-clackety all the time, like dozens of knitting needles all going at once, and she knows that *some* important thingamajig is bent or broken or something. Then she finds that two trucks and three private cars are promptly rolled out of the way and the entire staff gathers to aid her. And if by any chance this doesn't take place, all she has to do is announce that she doesn't mind waiting and then walk around the shop, asking eager, interested questions of the men, deep in their grease cups. She will be rewarded with prompt attention.

A woman should choose the same service station that her husband uses, for several reasons. Just as too many cooks spoil the broth, so too many mechanics tinkering on your motor do it little good. One pair of loving, understanding hands is enough. Then, too, it affords the garageman a sense of power and pleasure to have both you and your husband turning to him for advice, consolation, and secrecy — your husband one week to have a dent in the front fender



Walk around the shop, asking eager, interested questions of the men, deep in their grease cups

The Right Service Station

fixed so that *you* won't notice it and you the next week to have a bashed-in bumper lifted so that *he* won't notice it. Because of very serious fender and bumper trouble, some unfortunate women are obliged to enter not only into deep-seated conspiracies with their service men, but lifelong payment plans as well. Still, on the whole, it's worth it.

Women should never attempt any repair work themselves, and, indeed, they seem to know instinctively that the inner workings of an automobile haven't the cosy intimacy about them that those of a vacuum cleaner or a waffle iron have. Beyond opening the hood and giving the sturdier-looking entrails a few speculative taps and shakes, the wise woman will not go. Some women don't even lift the hood.

If trouble occurs on the road, at some distance from a garage, the best and only thing to do is to stand by the car, looking as helpless as possible, and signal all approaching cars driven by males. Some man will be sure to stop if only out of sheer meanness, so that he can later tell his own wife about the brainless idiot of a woman he rescued upon the highway.

Similarly, only very minor scrapes and

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scratches should be attended to by the woman driver. In the case of an old car they are generally overlooked or even not noticed at all. In the case of a new car they assume great importance. Some women are very clever in disguising or concealing these blemishes, using applications that range from condensed milk to facial cream and wrinkle remover.

Veteran women drivers usually have their own favorite recipes. In the event of a caved-in fender, however, the end of Junior's machine gun will not serve to whack it back. The friendly garageman is the only answer.

In the troublesome matter of buying gasoline, a co-operative garageman can be of immeasurable service. The problem of the gasoline supply has caused a rift in many a lute and a crack in many a budget. It becomes a battle of wits between husband and wife, each one trying to plant the car on the other just when the tank is practically empty. No man ever goes off to the links on a Saturday afternoon without first looking fearfully at the gauge to see if there's still an eye-dropperful for him. The extremes to which this shifting of responsibility can go is illustrated by the case of Mrs. W., who, travelling

The Right Service Station

on prayer until her husband should come home Saturday noon, became stalled on the railroad tracks just as his train was due!

This deplorable condition could be remedied by a little careful training of the service man. In the middle of the week let the woman drop the seed of suggestion in the mind of her garageman, thusly:

'I don't need gas today, Mr. Jones, but when my husband drops in on Saturday to have the tires pumped up, you'd better remind him to get some. He's so forgetful!'

On Saturday, therefore, Mr. Jones says, 'How about gas, sir? Shall I fill 'er up?'

Now the husband may have decided that there was enough gas to go through Monday, in which event the wife would have to pay for it out of her budget, but at the words 'Fill 'er up' some subtle psychic connection is made, rendering him incapable of giving a negative reply.

'Yes,' he says. 'Might as well. Make it five.'

This brings up another interesting point, another vital difference between the sexes. Man, although in the business world where mathematical calculations are made to a fine decimal point, is in the everyday world a natural spend-

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thrift. Will a man ever go in a store and buy an eighth of a yard of ribbon, a quarter of a pound of butter, half a bunch of carrots? A thousand times no! He buys his ribbon by the yard, his butter by the pound, his carrots by the bushel. In the case of gasoline, he never buys less than the conventional five gallons and in affluent circumstances often gets ten, or even says, grandly, 'The limit, Jo,' the while he walks about in a lordly manner, watching the clock merrily tick off the gallons.

Woman, on the other hand, accustomed to the daily grind of shopping, of peach-pinching and melon-squeezing, of hunting out bargains with the pertinacity of a bloodhound, sees only cleverness and expediency in close trading, and most certainly no sense of shame. When she has only money enough for three gallons of gasoline, she buys three gallons, and if, by chance, she has to eke out her change with postage stamps and milk bottles — she does that too, with a serenity of spirit that is truly admirable.

Indeed, the only one to quail is the service man, and it is not long before he is well trained to remind all husbands on Saturday and Sunday to fill 'er up and fill 'er deep!

The New Car

BREATHE GENTLY ON THE BRAND-NEW CAR;
LET NO RAIN SPATTER, NO RUDE JOLT JAR,
NO HOT SUN BLISTER, NO MUD BESPRAY,
SHE'S QUEEN OF THE ROAD (AT LEAST FOR A DAY).

THE acquiring of a new car would seem on the surface of things to be an occasion for unalloyed rejoicing. A measure of rejoicing there is, to be sure, for who can withstand the thrill of a new car with its pristine paint gleaming? This joy, however, is largely overshadowed by dread. There is no period so difficult, so trying, as that in which a new car gradually ceases to be new. This period varies in length and intensity of agony in different families, of course, but it is always there and must always be endured.

A husband, when purchasing a car, may defer to his wife's tastes and opinions and blithely tell the salesman that he's really buying it for her

The Car Belongs to Mother

and that all he's interested in himself is the motor. Yet the minute the car is in the home garage, the wife finds she has nothing to say about it at all.

No miser ever watched over his gold more jealously and assiduously than the average man hovers over and around a new car. A speck of dust is immediately whisked off, whereas dust lay inches thick on what is now derisively termed the Old Hack.

He immediately launches a series of reforms: The New Car is to be treated right. If the church and the clubs and the neighbors want stuff carted, they can jolly well do their own carting. The children are to sit down in it like human beings with their hands in their laps, instead of having them all over the windows. If he catches the dog in it, he'll choke him. Furthermore, all provisions are going to be ordered from the stores and delivered by the stores. The New Car isn't going to be used as a vegetable truck. And so on.

He also gives dissertations on the New Car's precious peculiarities, girded as he is with all the pamphlets and instruction books that come with a car like the circulars that accompany a

The New Car

tube of toothpaste. He reads from them, gravely, all about what to do on cold mornings, how to shift on hills, how to act when in a skid. And the wife has to listen, perforce.

During this period, indeed, she can do nothing but call on all her inner resources of courage and strength and remind herself that, like the dew of the morning, it soon will pass, although it may take longer. There's many a time, however, when a woman longs almost tearfully for the Old Hack into which she could pitch her bundles, jump in herself, and happily and heartily slam the door behind her.

Even people who scoff at superstitions admit that there is a jinx which dogs the tire treads of the New Car. A woman who has driven the Old Hack up hill and down dale, through snow and sleet, without even a minor accident, will carefully take the New Car out and come home with a three-foot third-degree scratch, without the slightest idea of how she secured it. Using the technique described in the previous chapter, women can often conceal or disguise first- or second-degree scratches, but they can do little or nothing with a third-degree wound or an actual disfiguring injury. Even

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the most skillful garageman will be of little help in the lastnamed catastrophe, for the husband looks over his new possession night and morning with an eagle eye, an eye that can readily spot any surgical operations ten feet off.

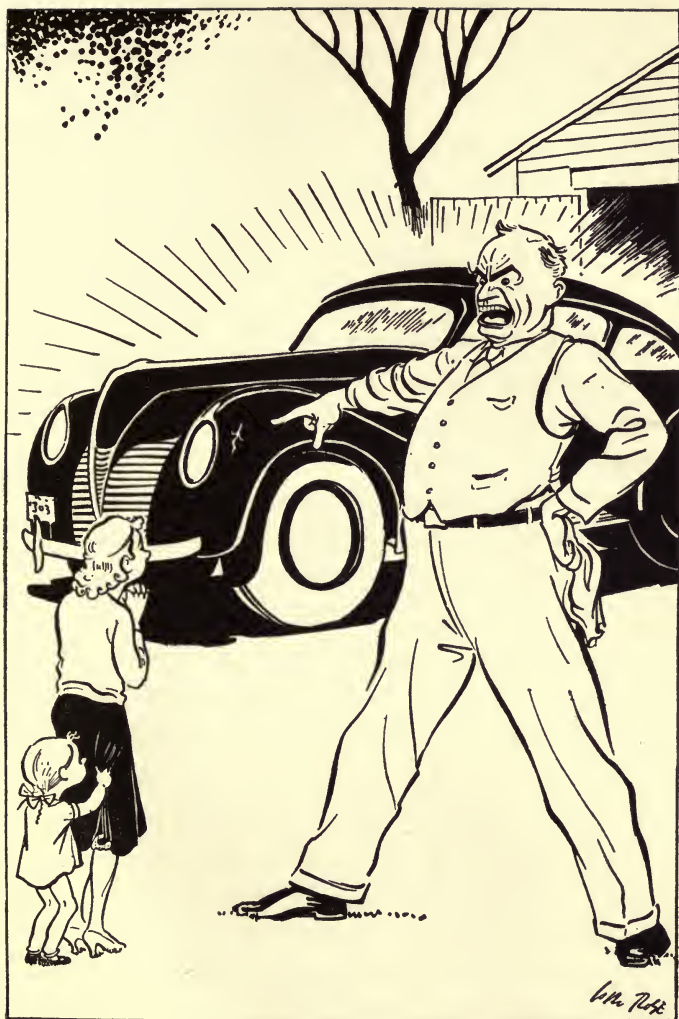
It's a clever woman who can anoint a blemish so that her husband doesn't notice it until the probation period has passed. She dreads his return at night, dreads the morning run more than ever, for all too soon she hears his awesome bellow:

'Look here! What's this on the New Car!'

If the accident is one which home treatment can't cure or conceal, it is often best to shoulder the blame heroically — and to shoulder it before there's any blame. This is a most important point. In other words, before the accident has been discovered, announce it. This takes the edge off the husband's fury.

Some women find that a calm, dispassionate statement of the facts is best. Others rely on a pathetic recital. Still others fall back on a bit of bellowing of their own.

The case of young Mrs. X is a dramatic one. Mrs. X took the New Car out for her (Mrs. X's) maiden voyage, thought that the rear doors



All too soon she hears his awesome bellow: 'Look here! What's this on the New Car!'

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were securely closed, and, in going out of the garage, ripped one of them (the one that wasn't closed) completely off. Even with the Old Hack, this would have been a major accident. In the case of the New Car, it was, of course, the direst sort of tragedy. Mrs. X got the car back in again, shudderingly picked up the door as if it were a limb from a human torso, locked the garage, went in the house, and took to her bed.

When her husband returned home and found his wife lying prostrate with a queer, haunted light in her eyes, he was naturally alarmed. 'Why, what's the matter, honey?' he said solicitously. 'When I left, you were feeling all right and were going to take the New Car out.'

At these words Mrs. X screamed and shrieked in actual pain. When the tumult had finally died down and Mr. X discovered that his wife was neither hopelessly insane nor in the clutches of some dread malady, a mere car door had assumed its rightful importance in the Great Scheme of Things.

It often takes just such a baptism of fire to make conditions normal again. Woman, bearing the heavier burden, usually is the one to get

The New Car

baptized. Sometimes, happily, it is the man who shamefacedly returns with a cauliflower-eared fender. The wife's rôle in this instance should be one of magnanimity. Diatribe never becomes a woman, and besides, she should remember that she may at any moment bring home a mate to it.

After the baptism of fire, a new and brighter day dawns. The husband puts away the instruction books and goes back to detective stories. He no longer hovers about, his eyes seeking for flaws and his ears for skips in the motor. He allows dust to gather. There comes a morning when he gives his old accustomed slam to the door as he swings in behind the wheel.

In a week's time the children are tracing their initials on the windows, the dog is in his favorite corner, panting happily on the upholstery and barking condescendingly at his friends on the street, card tables, vegetables, fruits and the Sunday roast are being transported as of old. In fact, the New Car has become simply the Car — nice, comfortable American living, working, and travelling quarters.

CHAPTER IX

The Arm of the Law

BE FRIENDS WITH THE COP
AND WITH HIM PLAY CRICKET;
HE'LL GIVE YOU A SMILE —
AND ALSO A TICKET.

POLICEMEN have been made the butt of too many unkind jokes. As a matter of fact they are merely ordinary human beings earning their living in an extremely difficult and unpleasant manner. After waving their arms for hours upon end at line after line of automobiles, it is only for the sake of their sanity that they suddenly turn on some hapless motorist or pedestrian (usually the former) and blast him to the infernal regions.

The problem of the police as it concerns the woman driver is twofold — local and extra-local. The local situation presents little difficulty. It behooves every woman to make friends with

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the police in her town, to know them by name and to nod at them pleasantly while cleverly skirting their spacious forms.

This can be done very easily. A woman, chauffeuring children to school, doing her marketing and the sundry chores, soon becomes acquainted with the policemen on duty. And they, in turn, know her from afar. They know who are the poor backers and parkers and watch over them solicitously. They stop traffic thoroughly and completely while Mrs. M gets in or out of a space and brusquely order an out-of-towner on if he presumes to park in the place usually occupied by Mrs. N.

There is often no limit to which their care and loyalty doesn't go. Consider the case of Mrs. Y, who went to her hairdresser's, thoughtlessly leaving her car on the trolley tracks but thoughtfully locking it. In time the trolley car came. Mrs. Y was snug under the dryer with blasts of hot air whirring in her ears. The infuriated motorman danced vainly upon his bell. Officer Q walked up to investigate. He knew the car was Mrs. Y's and that she had, of course, locked it so that it couldn't be pushed off the tracks. The question was, where was Mrs. Y?

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He looked up and down at the blocks of stores. The dentist? No, Mrs. Y had been to the dentist only recently. He remembered, because she had had a bit of trouble parking that day. It wasn't the time for marketing. The drugstore, the Yarn Shoppe... he considered them all. It was the Beautie Boxe that seemed to beckon him.

Mrs. Y, engrossed in magazines, gave a little shriek when she saw him enter. Without waiting for explanations, she groped in her bag for her keys and thrust them at him.

Nor did Officer Q's loyalty end with driving Mrs. Y's car off the tracks. He went forthwith to a telephone booth, called the Omnipotent Person and described Mrs. Y as a well-meaning, harmless idiot. So clever was his plea that by the time the motorman made his own complaint, he was considered a cantankerous individual, too prone to let little things upset him.

If policemen are such models of gentle kindness and their relations with women drivers on such a high plane of helpfulness, why, then, is there ever trouble? The answer is clearly this: the congenial state of conditions described above



Even as the local police take out their frustrations upon outsiders, so women drivers when they leave the home territory become immediate prey for thwarted police of the next town

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exists purely on a local basis. Even as the local police take out their frustrations upon outsiders, jumping on the first foreigner who makes a U turn, so women drivers when they leave the home territory become immediate prey for thwarted police of the next town. Under the lenient eye of Officer Q, a woman can park at odd angles wherever she chooses, but in the town next door, if she so much as goes over the white line, she must expect to suffer for it!

What to do? Well, the crudely expressed but tried and true rule of putting up and shutting up is, in the end, the best. Coy, kittenish ways never avail, at least not with the women of the age this book deals with. With them it is more advisable to turn on the guile rather than the glamour. Adopt meekness, mildness, even vacuosity.

Men are often able to admit courteously that they are at fault and so stem or at least lessen the tide of official wrath. Not so a woman. In the first place, it is very difficult for her to admit she is at fault. If she begins to do so, she may suddenly change her mind and argue the point, or something comes into her voice that tells

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the officer better than words just what she is thinking of him. It is safer, then, to say *absolutely nothing*.

It is most important, too, that this rule of silence be imposed on all passengers. Many a woman with a car full of girls has been held up for a minor infraction. If they will all slyly tilt their hats at strange angles, making them look even more weird, if possible, and sit open-mouthed but still, the officer may judge them to be trusted inmates of an asylum and allow them to proceed without even a final threat. If, however, one or more of the girls ill-advisedly and spiritedly rises to the driver's defense, the officer, who unconsciously stopped the car in the first place because it reminded him that his wife and mother-in-law had gone off to a bridge party and that a cold supper would be waiting for him, may well become so infuriated that he stops at nothing short of demanding the death penalty.

Docility will always accomplish more than defiance and one never knows to what extent its wonders will work. Mrs. S, on taking two of her own children and five of the neighbors' on an outing, was stopped in a strange city for

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passing a trolley on the wrong side. The policeman, big and belligerent, vented on her all the venom that he had been collecting for half a day. Dutifully she nodded in agreement whenever he stopped to take breath. Her own two children were in front with her. The five in the rear had hidden on the floor, but finally, attracted by such interesting language, popped up to regard the officer with frank childlike eyes. He soon became aware of them. He counted them. Seven. He was a believer in large families.

‘Madam,’ he said, in softened tones, ‘are them kids all yourn?’

Mrs. S, besides being a stickler for truth, was also chairman of the Committee for Better Speech, but, so accustomed was she by this time to nodding her head at each pause, that she inadvertently bowed her head as if in shame.

‘Faith, you should be proud!’ boomed the officer. ‘Sure, it’s more women like you that the country needs!’ And he blew a tremendous blast on his whistle to bar everything from her path and majestically waved her on.

In brief, women would do well to remember it is often smart to be dumb.

Trips

WE JOURNEY FAR
NOR COUNT IT DEAR,
TO PEN THESE WORDS —
'WISH YOU WERE HERE!'

TRIPS are purely American customs — or vices. It is doubtful if people of any nation on this planet feel so obliged to take trips as do Americans. To confess that one has been through an entire summer without at least one trip involving ten or more days, several thousand miles, innumerable gallons of gasoline, countless souvenirs, not to mention assorted cases of sunburn, indigestion, and insect bites, would be to admit that one was anti-American. In addition to a major trip, there must be several week-end excursions when one leaves a comfortable, peaceful home, forfeits the Sunday paper, to

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tear three or four hundred miles and come home exhausted. It's clearly evident there must be trips if only to keep cabins occupied, hotdog stands flourishing, and postcards up to date.

Trips, as they concern the woman driver, are divided into three groups — family, friendly, conjugal. In none of them does a great deal of actual driving responsibility rest upon her. Indeed, in this last chapter of ours, woman leaves the wheel for the most part.

The family trip is the most harrowing. This takes place when the entire family goes off in close family spirit, made even closer because of the necessary baggage which the trunk can't begin to hold. Sometimes the idea is to get to a distant lake or seaside resort and then stay. This is commendable, for, while the experience of getting there and back is gruelling, a certain amount of rest and relaxation may be had while there. Too often the trip is a one- or two-night stand affair on which the family visits historic shrines and feasts upon new scenery. Although there are usually several worthwhile historic spots and not half-bad views near-by, parents will herd their offspring together and dash seven or eight hundred miles to



The family trip is most harrowing

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see forts and what-not that the natives there haven't bothered to look at.

On these educational journeys, the man drives while the woman sits in the back seat with one or more of the children. Games are usually played, some of them being the jolly ones of counting the number of saloons, the number of women not in beach pajamas or slacks, the number of men with neckties — thus teaching the children not only arithmetic but alertness and interest in the unusual. An old-style sanitary cart manned with pumps often counts a hundred points in these games and is hailed with delight by all except the father who may have to trail it on a winding road.

Some of these pastimes have intriguing penalties. That is, when passing a cemetery, everybody plays dead, while on passing a dump some trifle must be thrown out of the window, and woe betide if, in the scurry and fun, it later proves to be Daddy's binoculars. Whenever, indeed, the reader sees an out-of-state car pass through his town in the summer, with children eagerly peering from the windows and crawling over a weary-faced woman on the back seat, while a grim-eyed man is bent over the wheel,

Trips

he will know they are out seeing their country and give them a God-speed as they pass.

The educational trip usually ends when the parents discover the bitter truth that the children are far more interested in visiting the five-and-ten-cent stores along the way than all the cradles of liberty, independence, and heroism there may be.

Friendly trips take place with another couple with whom the husband and wife have possibly played bridge during the winter — the Z's, for instance. On these trips the wife is again on the back seat, this time with Mrs. Z, while Mr. Z sits in front with the husband. The men can therefore talk over pet smoking theories, automobiles, and politics while the women are supposed to be content with domestic problems.

These excursions seldom last more than a week, which is usually long enough. They can be very successful, and they can, alas, be exactly the contrary. If a true community of interests exists, all return imbued with the prospect of a second trip the following year. Such a community, however, is rare. Little differences in tastes and opinions arise which become intensely irritating as time goes on. For example,

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Alice Z may have to have a cup of hot water before meals, a failing which she has kept concealed until now, and her insistence upon procuring it strikes both the husband and wife as a bit petty. Henry Z proves himself to be an amateur geologist and squanders precious time while he hunts for rocks, inadvertently dropping one on the camera (not his own).

The Z's in all fairness may also be irked by habits of their host and hostess, sharing little grievances in the privacy of their cabin at nightfall. There is seldom open animosity, merely an uncomfortable strain and open relief on the part of all when the homeward journey is started.

The conjugal trip is truly revolutionary. It occurs when the husband and wife decide to get away from it all and go off absolutely alone. Sometimes there is no special destination; again, the husband may pore over road maps and have everything planned with the nicety of a railroad timetable. It all depends upon his disposition, and, in fact, the success of the entire trip depends on just that same thing. The wise woman takes her hands off the wheel physically, but never relinquishes it mentally for a moment,

and knows just when to supply gas and oil, especially the latter!

The husband drives, of course, although the wife gently and sweetly tells him she stands ready to relieve him at any time so that he, too, may look at the scenery. This brings out his masterfulness as he says he guesses he can drive and look at the same time — always has. A woman must be careful with suggestions about roads to take and places to eat and sleep. Invariably the roads she advises will be covered with fresh tar or riddled with ditches, while Ye Olde Hay-Mow, where she and the girls once had such a delicious lunch, will have food that is positively poisonous, and the cabins she picks out because of their picturesqueness are certain to be like coffins.

If the man makes all arrangements or feels that he is making them, and they prove fortunate, his self-esteem is inflated and he is often affable enough to stop off at an antique auction or an exhibit of hooked rugs. And if they are not happy, he has more respect for the judgment of the wife, and turns subsequent arrangements over to her. In either case, she is the winner.

The conjugal trip, whatever its hazards and

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disappointments, is on the whole well worth attempting and carrying through to a finish. More money is always spent than would be spent at home, and nothing is more soul-satisfying than a bit of prodigality; the home itself, after a few days' absence from it, looms dear and hallowed; and the children become actually cherubic as distance from them increases. Moreover, the man, by the time the trip is over, has had his fill of driving and gladly relinquishes the wheel to the woman — who the very next day may start off with the girls for a little jaunt of a few hundred miles! The husband looks after her with respect and wonder in his eyes, as all men should look. Tireless, courageous, venturesome . . . on she goes! Will she stop? Not if she knows!



SO WE'LL LIVE

By Priscilla Hovey Wright

AN unusual first novel of life in a small New England town. The story is woven about two families — united through marriage: the Farnhams, who are small storekeepers, and the Dexters, who are wealthy mill owners. It is through the eyes of Janey Farnham that we see their fortunes change, their hopes and sufferings come to maturity or defeat. Through her we watch the struggle of a younger generation, striving to profit by the past, and to make for itself a better, fuller life.

Mrs. Wright makes every character real, and every reader feel that he has stepped for a short space into the life of a small New England town.

